

NATURA IMPACT REPORT

**IN SUPPORT OF THE
APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT**

**FOR
PROPOSED AMENDMENT NO. 1**

TO THE

**GAELTACHT LOCAL AREA PLAN
2008-2014**

for: **Galway County Council**

County Buildings

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Galway



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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This is the Natura Impact Report for Proposed Amendment No. 1 to the Gaeltacht Local Area Plan 2008-2014 in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive¹. This report is divided into these four sections:

- Section 1 Introduction
- Section 2 Stage 1 Screening
- Section 3 Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment
- Section 4 Mitigation Measures
- Section 5 Conclusions

1.2 Legislative Context

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as "The Habitats Directive", provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public"

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the [Natura 2000] site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

This legislation is implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. These new regulations consolidate the European Communities

¹ Directive 92/43/EEC

(Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats)(Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010, as well as addressing transposition failures identified in the CJEU judgements. Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 provides the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment on, inter alia, Proposed Amendments to Local Area Plans.

1.3 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

This Appropriate Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities.* Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009.
- *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC,* European Commission Environment DG, 2000.
- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC:* European Commission, 2000

AA comprises up to four stages:

Stage One: Screening

The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment

The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.

Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

The process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain

An assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. First, the plan should aim to avoid any impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan-making process and writing the plan in order to avoid such impacts. Second, mitigation measures should be applied, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If the plan is still likely to result in impacts on European sites, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, then it must be rejected. If no alternative solutions are identified and the plan is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI test) under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effect.

Section 2 Stage 1 Screening

2.1 Description of the Proposed Amendment

The existing Gaeltacht LAP 2008-2014² consists of a written statement and appendices which contain maps and development control guidelines and standards. The existing LAP includes sectoral objectives for each of the six Gaeltacht districts and specific policies and objectives (including those relating to land use zoning) for the settlements of An Cheathrú Rua and An Spidéal.

The Proposed Amendment will leave the existing Plan boundary and the boundaries of the An Spidéal and An Cheathrú Rua zoning areas unchanged.

The Proposed Amendment does not provide for changes to zoning objectives that would increase the likelihood of development in the An Spidéal or An Cheathrú Rua zoned areas.

The zoning of 'Residential' areas will be changed in order to introduce the phasing of residential lands ('Residential Phase 1' and 'Residential Phase 2'). Undeveloped Residential Phase 1 lands will be prioritised for development over the lifetime of this plan period. The development of Undeveloped Residential Phase 2 lands is likely to be delayed or not occur within this plan period. The phasing that is detailed in the Proposed Amendment has had particular regard to the spatial peripherality of lands and other environmental considerations.

The content of the Proposed Amendment is described in more detail in the subsections below.

2.1.1 Issue 1: Consistency with the Galway County Development Plan and Core Strategy

This includes updated references to development plan policies, objectives and standards and the phasing of zoned lands to comply with the population and zoned residential land allocation for An Spidéal and An Cheathrú Rua under the Core Strategy.

- An Spideal is allocated a population growth target of 25 persons by 2015, with a housing land requirement of 1.19 Hectares (with 50% over-zoning), under the Core Strategy.
- An Ceathru Rua is allocated a population growth target of 105 persons by 2015 with a housing land requirement of 5.03 Hectares (with 50% over-zoning) under the Core Strategy.

The Amendment includes the phasing of lands within these settlements to ensure that the land use zonings and development areas in the Gaeltacht LAP comply with the provisions of the Core Strategy.

2.1.2 Issue 2: Incorporation of Flood Risk Assessment information and measures to address the requirements of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009

This includes flood risk assessment information available as part of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) produced by the OPW which forms part of the Western CFRAM as well as the findings of the Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Proposed Amendments. The Stage 2 SFRA is included as Appendix II to this SEA Environmental Report.

This document has taken on board reliable local knowledge of past flooding extents including the source and direction of flood paths, and site walkovers by experienced personnel to identify the locations of topographic and built features that coincide with flood related boundaries that have been

² The current LAP 2009-2015 is available at:

<http://www.galway.ie/en/Services/Planning/DevelopmentPlans/LocalAreaPlans/AdoptedPlans/GaeltachtLocalAreaPlan/>

shown on various maps and standing water and vegetation (including reeds) associated with frequency of inundation.

It is also proposed to introduce new policy, objectives and flood maps for the settlements of An Spidéal and An Cheathrú Rua to deal with flood risk assessment and management.

Flood risk areas and zones (including Flood Zone A, B and C) have been identified for An Spidéal and An Cheathrú Rua in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009.

The Amendment includes the incorporation of greenfield lands within Flood Zone A and B into an amended Recreational & Amenity zoning for the Land Use Zoning Maps for An Cheathrú Rua and An Spidéal. It is also proposed to include associated policies/objectives to ensure that inappropriate development is avoided in high flood risk areas.

The Amendment includes new Flood Risk Management Maps which are based on the output of the Stage 2 SFRA.

2.1.3 Issue 3: Incorporation of additional measures to protect designated environmental sites and address recommendations in the SEA and AA

New and revised provisions to further protect European Sites and the environment (including those measures which arose from this SEA process and from the Appropriate Assessment process) have been integrated into the Proposed Amendment.

2.1.4 Issue 4: Addressing legislative, policy and data changes since the adoption of the Plan

This includes updated references to the following: legislation, policy and guidelines published since the adoption of the Gaeltacht LAP 2008-2014; changes to departmental titles; population and land use data; etc.

The Amendment includes an introduction of the Core Strategy context and other legislation and policy requirements, and changes to other relevant sections of the Plan and to the Land Use Zoning Matrix.

2.1.5 Issue 5: Amendments to Development Control Standards

The Amendment includes changes to Development Control Standards - now titled Development Management Guidelines .

2.1.6 Issue 6: Other Amendments

Outdated data and objectives have been amended or removed as appropriate.

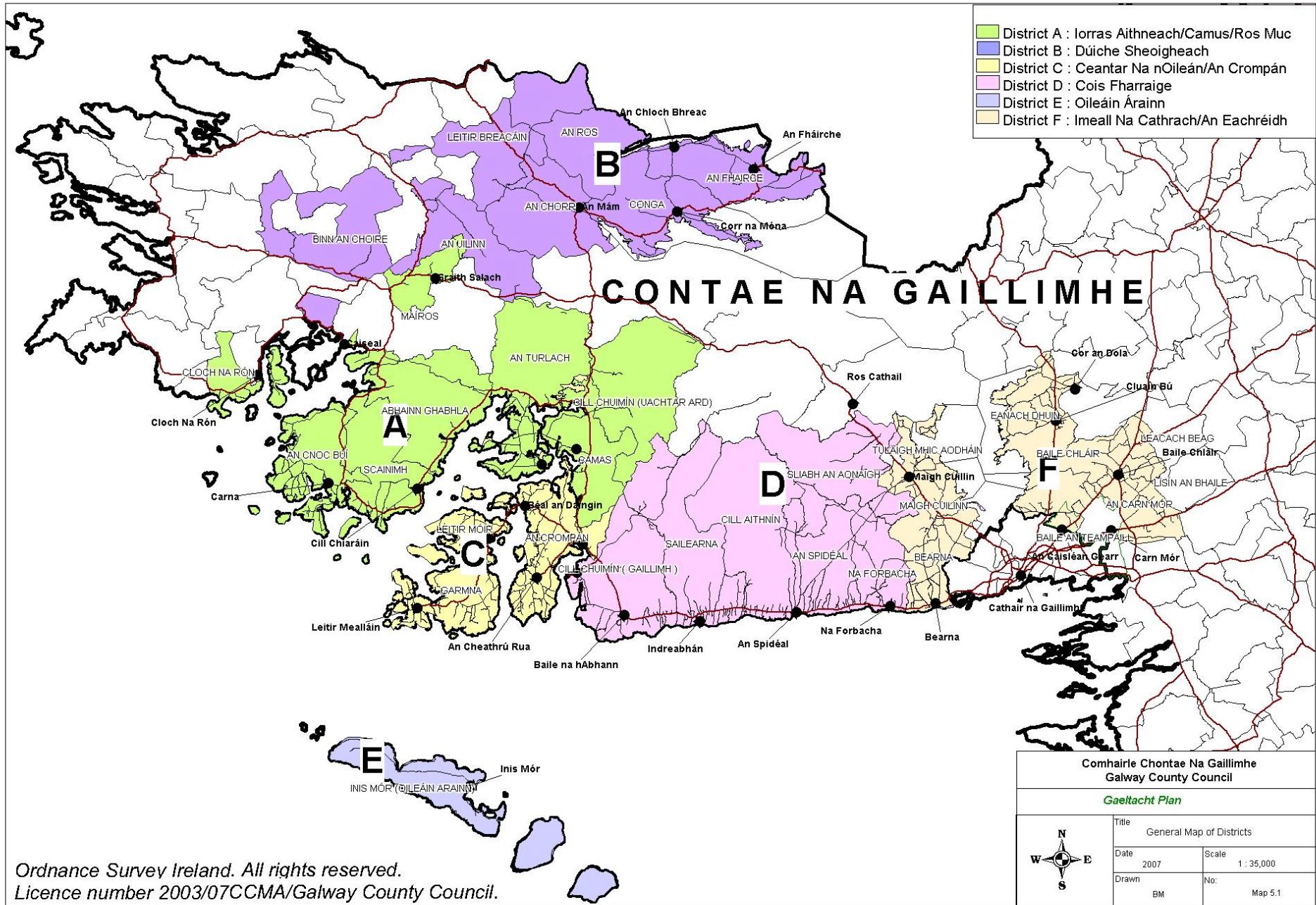


Figure 2.1 Areas subject to the Gaeltacht Local Area Plan

2.2 European Sites in and within 15 km of the Plan Area

2.2.1 SACs and SPAs

This section of the screening process describes the European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network within a 15km zone of impact of the plan area. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the DoE document *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities* and as a precautionary measure, to ensure that all potentially affected European designated sites are included in the screening process. A map indicating the locations of the sites is given in **Figure 2.1**.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 lists the European designated sites that are the plan area and 15 km of the boundary. The qualifying features for each site have been obtained through a review of the NPWS website.

Table 2.1 SACs potentially affected by the Proposed Amendment

Site name and code	Conservation Interests
000020 Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex cSAC	<p>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation</p> <p>Alpine and Boreal heaths</p> <p><i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco Brometalia</i>)(important orchid sites)</p> <p>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)</p> <p>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)</p> <p>Reefs</p> <p>Limestone pavements</p> <p>Submerged or partly submerged sea caves</p> <p>Perennial vegetation of stony banks</p> <p><i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i></p>
000054 Moneen Mountain cSAC	<p>Limestone pavements</p> <p>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco Brometalia</i>)(important orchid sites)</p> <p>Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i></p> <p>Alpine and Boreal heaths</p> <p><i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands</p> <p>Turloughs</p> <p><i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i></p> <p><i>Euphydryas aurinia</i></p>
000212 Inishmaan Island cSAC	<p>Reefs [1170]</p> <p>Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</p> <p>Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</p> <p>Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</p> <p>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</p> <p>Machairs [21A0]</p> <p>European dry heaths [4030]</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco Brometalia</i>)(*important orchid sites) [6210]</p> <p>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]</p> <p>Limestone pavements [8240]</p>

Site name and code	Conservation Interests
000213 Inishmore Island cSAC	<p><i>Vertigo angustior</i> [1014] Coastal lagoons [1150] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp.<i>argentea</i> (<i>Salix arenariae</i>) [2170] Humid dune slacks [2190] Machairs [21A0] European dry heaths [4030] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco Brometalia</i>)(*important orchid sites) [6210] Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] Limestone pavements [8240] Submerged or partly submerged sea caves [8330]</p>
000242 Castletaylor Complex cSAC	Turloughs Alpine and Boreal heaths <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco Brometalia</i>)(important orchid sites) Limestone pavements
000268 Galway Bay Complex cSAC	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] Common seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) [1365] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Turloughs [3180] <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]

Site name and code	Conservation Interests
	<p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia)(*important orchid sites) [6210]</p> <p>Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210]</p> <p>Alkaline fens [7230]</p>
000297 Lough Corrib cSAC	<p>Freshwater pearl mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) [1029]</p> <p>White-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) [1092]</p> <p>Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095]</p> <p>Brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) [1096]</p> <p>Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106]</p> <p>Lesser horseshoe bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) [1303]</p> <p>Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355]</p> <p>Shining sickle moss (<i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i>) [1393]</p> <p>Slender naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) [1833]</p> <p>Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) [3110]</p> <p>Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140]</p> <p>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260]</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia)(*important orchid sites) [6210]</p> <p>Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410]</p> <p>Active raised bogs [7110]</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]</p> <p>Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210]</p> <p>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]</p> <p>Alkaline fens [7230]</p> <p>Limestone pavements [8240]</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles [91A0]</p> <p>Bog woodland [91D0]</p>
000322 Rahasane Turlough cSAC	Turloughs
000324 Rosroe Bog cSAC	<p>Blanket bog (active only)</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion</p>
000328 Slyne Head Islands cSAC	<p>Reefs</p> <p><i>Halichoerus grypus</i></p>
000330 Tully Mountain cSAC	<p>European dry heaths</p> <p>Alpine and Boreal heaths</p>

Site name and code	Conservation Interests
	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) Blanket bog (active only)
000461 Ardkill Turlough cSAC	Turloughs
000479 Cloughmoyne cSAC	Limestone pavements
000480 Clyard Kettle-holes cSAC	Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> Turloughs
000504 Kilglassan/Caheravooostia Turlough Complex cSAC	Turloughs
000525 Shrude Turlough cSAC	Turloughs
000541 Skealoghan Turlough cSAC	Turloughs
000606 Lough Fingall Complex cSAC	Turloughs Limestone pavements Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco Brometalia</i>)(important orchid sites) Alpine and Boreal heaths <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>
000996 Ballyvaughan Turlough cSAC	Turloughs
001251 Cregduff Lough cSAC	Slender naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) [1833] Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]
001257 Dog's Bay cSAC	Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] European dry heaths [4030]
001271 Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement cSAC	Limestone pavements
001275 Inisheer Island cSAC	Coastal lagoons [1150] Reefs [1170] European dry heaths [4030] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco Brometalia</i>)(*important orchid sites) [6210] Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] Limestone pavements [8240]

Site name and code	Conservation Interests
001285 Kiltiernan Turlough cSAC	Turloughs
001309 Oney Island Machair cSAC	Machairs (in Ireland) Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>
001311 Rusheenduff Lough cSAC	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) <i>Najas flexilis</i>
001312 Ross Lake And Woods cSAC	Lesser horseshoe bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) [1303] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] Alkaline fens [7230] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]
001536 Mocorha Lough cSAC	Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i>
001774 Lough Carra/Mask Complex cSAC	Lesser horseshoe bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) [1303] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] Shining sickle moss (<i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i>) [1393] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] European dry heaths [4030] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco Brometalia</i>)(*important orchid sites) [6210] Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion</i>
001926 East Burren Complex cSAC	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. Turloughs Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation Alpine and Boreal heaths <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco Brometalia</i>)(important orchid sites)

Site name and code	Conservation Interests
	<p>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) Alkaline fens Limestone pavements Caves not open to the public Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> <i>Lutra lutra</i> <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i></p>
001932 Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex cSAC	<p>Coastal lagoons Annual vegetation of drift lines Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) Embryonic shifting dunes Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp.<i>argentea</i> (<i>Salix arenariae</i>) Machairs (in Ireland) Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoëto-Nanojuncetea</i> Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> European dry heaths Alpine and Boreal heaths <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands Blanket bog (active only) Transition mires and quaking bogs Alkaline fens Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i></p>

Site name and code	Conservation Interests
	<p><i>Salmo salar</i> <i>Lutra lutra</i> <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> <i>Vertigo geyeri</i> <i>Vertigo angustior</i> <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> <i>Najas flexilis</i></p>
002008 Maumturk Mountains cSAC	<p>Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106] Slender naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) [1833] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Blanket bog (*active only) [7130] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]</p>
002031 The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex cSAC	<p>Freshwater pearl mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) [1029] Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] Slender naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) [1833] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Blanket bog (*active only) [7130] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110] Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles [91A0]</p>
002034 Connemara Bog Complex cSAC	<p>Marsh fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) [1065] Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106] Coastal lagoons [1150] Reefs [1170] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] Slender naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) [1833] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i></p>

Site name and code	Conservation Interests
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vegetation [3260] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010] European dry heaths [4030] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] Blanket bog (*active only) [7130] Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] Alkaline fens [7230] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles [91A0]
002074 Slyne Head Peninsula cSAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal lagoons Annual vegetation of drift lines Perennial vegetation of stony banks Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) Embryonic shifting dunes Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) Machairs (in Ireland) Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorellatalia uniflorae</i>) <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>)(important orchid sites) Large shallow inlets and bays Reefs Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. European dry heaths Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) Alkaline fens <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> <i>Najas flexilis</i>
002111 Kilkieran Bay And Islands cSAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355]

Site name and code	Conservation Interests
	Common seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) [1365] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Slender naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) [1833] Machairs [21A0] Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]
002118 Barnahallia Lough cSAC	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) Blanket bog (active only) Slender naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>)
002119 Lough Nageeron cSAC	Slender naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) [1833] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110]
002129 Murvey Machair cSAC	Machairs (in Ireland) <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>
002130 Tully Lough cSAC	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) <i>Najas flexilis</i>
002244 Ardrahan Grassland cSAC	Alpine and Boreal heaths Limestone pavements <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands
002265 Kingstown Bay cSAC	Large shallow inlets and bays
002320 Kildun Souterrain cSAC	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>
002352 Monivea Bog cSAC	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration Active raised bogs Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion

Table 2.2 SPAs potentially affected by the Proposed Amendment

Site Code SPA Name	Feature of Interest
004062 Lough Mask SPA	Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]
Inishmore SPA 004152	Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) [A195] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199]
Cliffs of Moher SPA	Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204] Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346]
Rahasane Turlough SPA	Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]
Cregganna Marsh SPA	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]
Slyne Head To Ardmore Point Islands SPA	Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>)
Connemara Bog Complex SPA	Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A098] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]
Illaunnanoon SPA	Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) [A191]
Inishbofin, Omey Island and Turbot Island	Corncrake (<i>Crex crex</i>) [A122]
004031 Inner Galway Bay	Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) [A003] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]

Site Code SPA Name	Feature of Interest
	<p>Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) [A191] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]</p>
004042 Lough Corrib SPA	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) [A051] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) [A059] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]

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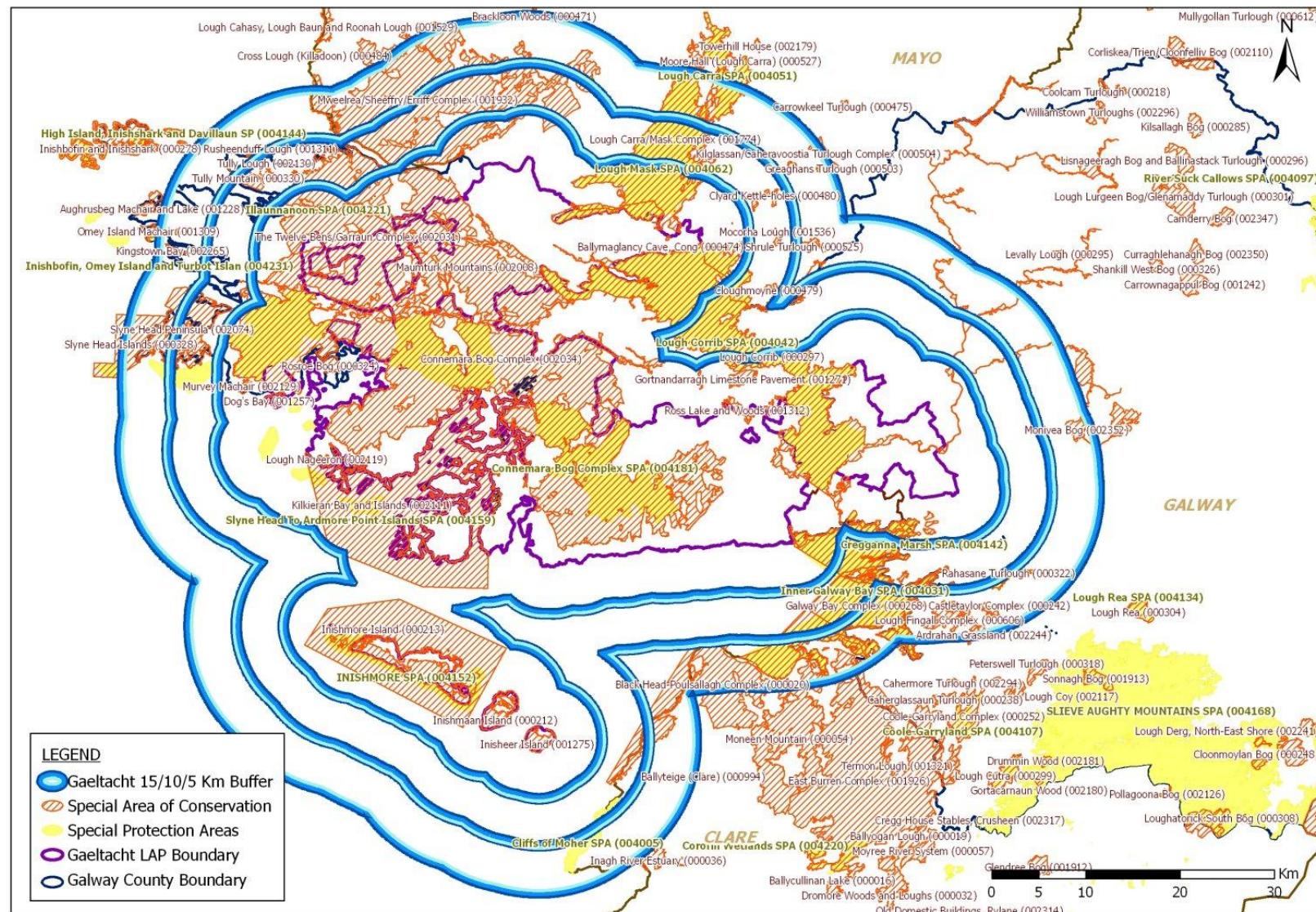


Figure 2.2 European designated sites within 15km of the Plan Area Boundary

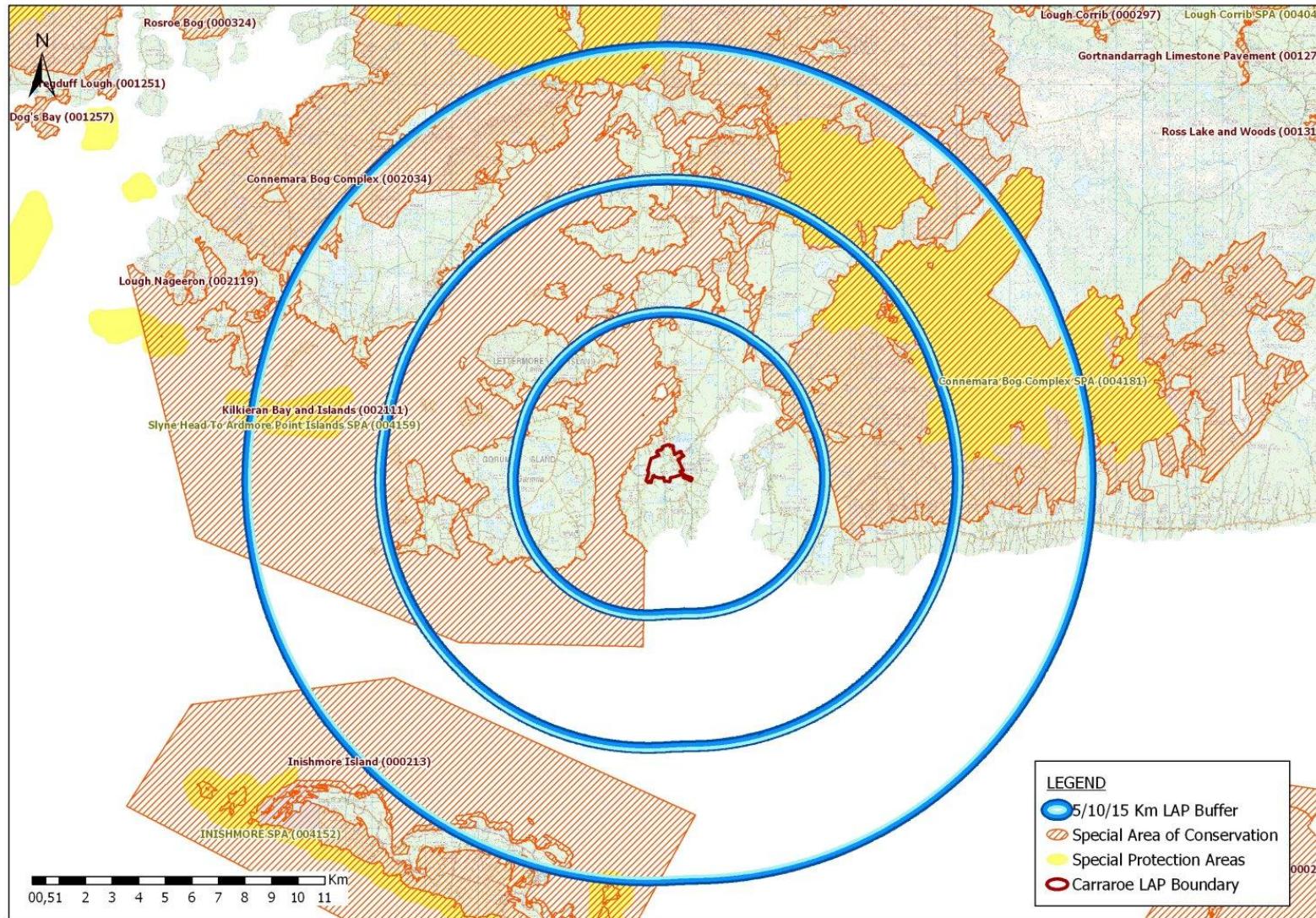


Figure 2.3 European designated Sites within 15km of An Cheathrú Rua

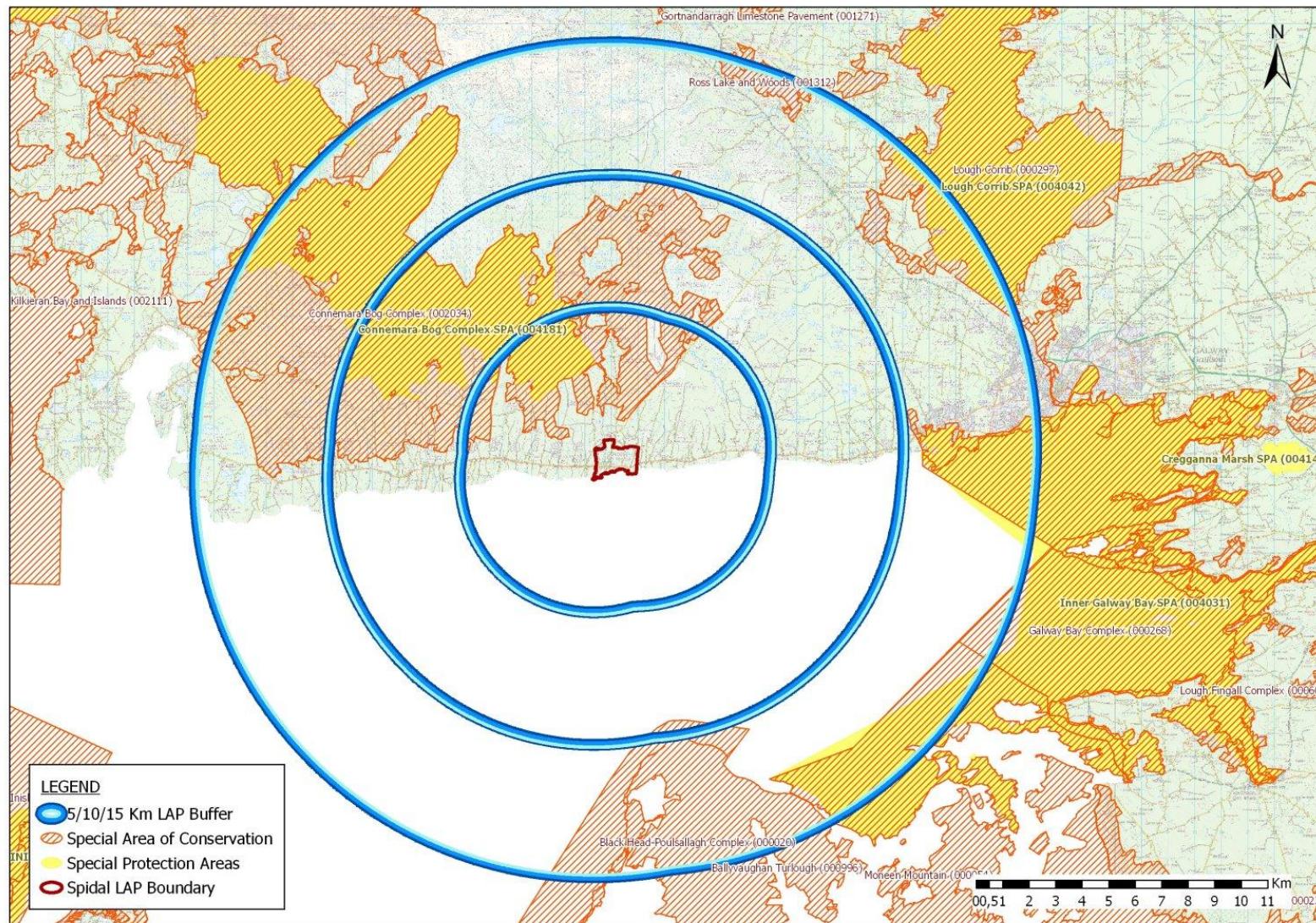


Figure 2.4 European designated sites within 15km of An Spidéal

2.3 Assessment Criteria

2.3.1 Is the Proposed Amendment Necessary to Management of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network?

Under the Habitats Directive, Plans that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site do not require AA. For this exception to apply, management is required to be interpreted narrowly as nature conservation management in the sense of Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive. This refers to specific measures to address the ecological requirements of annexed habitats and species (and their habitats) present on a site(s). The relationship should be shown to be direct and not a by-product of the plan, even if this might result in positive or beneficial effects for a site(s). The Proposed Amendments include measures that will benefit the protection of European designated sites however its primary purpose is not the nature conservation management of the sites, but to provide for development. Therefore, the LAP as amended is not considered by the Habitats Directive to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

2.4 Elements of the Proposed Amendment with Potential to Give Rise to Significant Effects

The Gaeltacht LAP 2008 – 2014 provides a 6 year statutory framework for guiding development and decision-making on planning applications and Council activities in the area covered by the LAP. The Plan provides guidance as to how this development can be achieved and what new developments are needed. The plan has been amended to ensure consistency with the Galway County Development Plan and Core Strategy, incorporate Flood Risk Assessment information and measures, incorporate additional measures to protect designated environmental sites and to address changes in legislation and policy since the adoption of the Plan. The Plan as a whole was reviewed and taking into consideration Appropriate Assessment screening carried out at the time the Plan was adopted (2008) individual elements of the amended Plan have been identified that may result in impacts on European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network.

Table 2.3 Elements of the Plan likely to give rise to impacts

District	Elements of the plan	Sites potentially affected
All Districts	Provision of key services such as housing, community facilities, water supply, wastewater services, transport, broadband and electricity supply lines.	Inishmaan Island cSAC Inishmore Island cSAC Galway Bay Complex cSAC Lough Corrib cSAC Rosroe Bog cSAC Cregduff Lough cSAC Dog's Bay cSAC Inisheer Island cSAC Ross Lake And Woods cSAC Lough Carra/Mask Complex cSAC Maumturk Mountains cSAC The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex cSAC Connemara Bog Complex cSAC Kilkieran Bay And Islands cSAC Lough Nageeron cSAC Lough Mask SPA Inishmore SPA Slyne Head To Ardmore Point Islands SPA Connemara Bog Complex SPA Inner Galway Bay SPA Lough Corrib SPA
District A: Iorras Aithneach/Camas/Ros Muc	Marine Works - A multi-annual development programme is in train	Lough Corrib cSAC The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex

District	Elements of the plan	Sites potentially affected
This is the District of South West Conamara from Doire Iorrais westwards through Cill Chiaráin, Carna, Glinsce, Bun na hAbhann, Caiseal and Inis Ní	for piers, harbours, slipways, landing places, etc Provision of 110kv electrical supply. Development of a Marina and other facilities at Cill Chiaráin. Roads improvement programme Tourism facilities such as walking routes and pontoon development at Más quay as a take-off point for Mac Dara Island.	cSAC Maumturk Mountains cSAC Rosroe Bog cSAC Cregduff Lough cSAC Kilkieran Bay and Islands cSAC Dog's Bay cSAC Lough Nageeron cSAC Connemara Bog Complex cSAC Slyne Head to Ardmore Point Islands SPA Lough Corrib SPA Connemara Bog Complex SPA
District B: Duiche Sheoigheach This District comprises most of North Conamara, stretching from Cong to Leenane and northwards from the N59 National Secondary Road to the County Mayo border. It is mountainous County, dominated by the Maamturk range, but including two of the great wild fishing lakes of western Europe in Lough Corrib and the southern portion of Lough Mask.	Allow local people to refurbish old abandoned houses Identify, develop specific projects for electricity generation from wind turbines and water power. Provision of broadband service. Development of car park/viewing area at Ardán. Improvement of main route connection to Galway, via Conga/Headford and An Mám/Oughterard. Improve local minor roads, in particular Ardán/An Fhairche. Development of open area, amenity area on Lough Corrib lake shore.	Lough Corrib cSAC The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex cSAC Maumturk Mountains cSAC Lough Carra/Mask Complex cSAC Connemara Bog Complex cSAC Connemara Bog Complex SPA Lough Mask SPA Lough Corrib SPA
District C: Ceantar na nOiléan/An Crompán This district includes the Electoral Divisions of Crompán, Leitir Móir and Leitir Mealláin and contains the village of An Cheathrú Rua, which the County Development Plan designates as the service hub for southwest Conamara, whose role is to consolidate service provision and residential capacity for the Gaeltacht region.	Marine Works - The multi annual development programme for marine on-shore structures The provision of new R336 route Galway - Casla. Continuation of the improvement of R343. The "causeway" to be widened. Provision for car parking at the various quays. Provide a swing bridge at Béal an Daingin/ Cuigéal. Continue minor road reconstruction programme. Development of additional wind turbines with consequent advantage to the local community in its electricity service. Development of walking routes, short distance and longer distance with suitable signage attached. Provision of Marina at An Sruthán	Connemara Bog Complex cSAC Kilkieran Bay And Islands cSAC Connemara Bog Complex SPA

District	Elements of the plan	Sites potentially affected
	<p>quay, and the assessment of the lands in the vicinity of the quay as to their potential for the recreation of the local community and for the tourism industry.</p> <p>Development and extension of Chalaidh Thaidhg.</p> <p>Development of Marine Heritage centre.</p> <p>Development of walking routes along the shoreline.</p> <p>Additional “moorings” to be provided on the quays for visiting boats</p>	
District D: Cois Fharraige The Cois Fharraige district of Conamara stretches from the western fringe of Galway City westwards along the northern coast of Galway Bay to Baile na h-Abhann and Ros an Mhíl	<p>Provision of new R336 along the emerging preferred corridor and associated link roads</p> <p>Support the continued improvement of the minor road system.</p> <p>Support the development of the Wild Atlantic Way tourist route.</p>	Lough Corrib cSAC Ross Lake And Woods cSAC Connemara Bog Complex cSAC Connemara Bog Complex SPA Lough Corrib SPA
District E: Oileáin Árann The three Aran Islands of Inis Mór, Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr are the limestone sentinels that stand guard over Galway Bay	<p>Improvement programme on quays and slipways.</p> <p>Examine the feasibility of wind turbines for single houses and for small clusters of houses.</p> <p>Support the relocation of overhead wirescape to below ground.</p> <p>Initiate a programme of protection from coastal erosion at vulnerable locations in particular adjoining the local airstrip.</p> <p>Continue and expand the annual Road Improvement Programme.</p>	Inishmaan Island cSAC Inishmore Island cSAC Inisheer Island cSAC Inishmore SPA
District F: Imeall Na Cathrach/An Eachréidh This is the part of the Gaeltacht which abuts and surrounds Galway City, some of it extending inside the City's administrative boundaries	Underline the importance of the Galway City Outer Bypass to the social and economic advantage of the Gaeltacht and supports its development.	Lough Corrib cSAC Galway Bay Complex cSAC Connemara Bog Complex SPA Inner Galway Bay SPA Lough Corrib SPA Ross Lake And Woods cSAC
Village Plan for An Spidéal	To support the provision of a new strategic route along the Cois Fharraige corridor from Galway to Scriob via Ros an Mhíl.	There are not statutory environmental designations within the plan boundary. Connemara Bog Complex cSAC is approximately 1 km to the north of the plan area. Provision of new strategic route may impact on Connemara Bog Complex cSAC.
Village plan for An Cheathrú Rua	Initiate a system of walking routes within the village and linking it with the development of a coastal walk	There are no statutory environmental designations within the Plan boundary. Kilkieran Bay

District	Elements of the plan	Sites potentially affected
	along the peninsula	And Islands cSAC is approx 1km away. Provision of walking routes along the coast may impact Kilkieran Bay And Islands cSAC

2.4.1 Direct, Indirect or Secondary Impacts

2.4.2 Assessment of Effects

In general, any development that may result from implementation of the amended LAP, such as construction of housing, roads, rail, water and wastewater infrastructure, gas, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure could lead to a number of impacts depending on where development is sited, the scale of development and types and quantities of emissions. Assessment of potential effects arising from the Proposed Amendments to the Gaeltacht LAP has been carried out in accordance with guidance from the EU document '*Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting European Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*', and the national guidance document '*Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities*'.

Table 2.4: Assessment of Effects

Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European sites by virtue of:	
Size and scale	The Plan provides for a range of development types from small scale one off housing developments to larger scale projects that may have an adverse impact over a wide range of sites.
Land-take;	There is potential for a direct loss or fragmentation of habitats arising from land-take requirements associated with the plan. Impacts arise directly through inappropriate siting of development within a European site or immediately adjacent to its boundary, which cause deterioration in the factors that support the favourable conditions of the site. Consequently, there is potential for a significant adverse effect on the integrity of these sites and their conservation objectives.
Distance from European Site or key features of the Site	There are 44 SACs and 11 SPAs within 15 km of the Plan area with 15 SACs and 6 SPAs lying within the plan area. There is potential for a direct loss or fragmentation of habitats arising from land-take requirements associated with the plan. In addition, hydrological connectivity between the Plan area and sites downstream may lead to a deterioration of water quality and quantity, leading to a reduction in capacity to support water dependant plants and species
Resource requirements	The Plan provides for ongoing provision of drinking water in the area, along with the development of new water supply schemes, specifically the Casla Regional Water Supply Scheme, which also serves An Ceathru Rua and schemes to serve Inis Oírr and Inis Meáin. Abstraction of surface waters will potentially have negative adverse impacts on surface water dependant habitats and species and can lead to habitat loss and habitat and species fragmentation. Abstraction of groundwater can lead to a lowering of the water table and adverse effects on groundwater dependant systems such as bogs and fens.
Emissions	There is potential for contamination of surface water dependant habitats through runoff from development during the construction or operational phases and through point source contamination from developments.

	Contamination may arise through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained.
Excavation requirements	The Proposed Amendments to the LAP does not specifically include any potential requirement for excavation works that will result in likely significant effects to European Sites. The potential impacts of excavations associated with the construction phase of developments within the Plan area are outlined above in relation to emissions from construction of lands zoned for development.
Transportation requirements	Specific objectives are included within the Plan to facilitate the development of walking and cycling routes within the Plan area, the maintenance and upgrade of existing roads and the provision of new roads and the development of tourist routes such as the Wild Atlantic Way. These types of 'linear' developments have the potential to cause direct impacts through loss of habitat and fragmentation of habitats and species, as well as indirect impacts through disturbance and contamination of water during construction
Describe any likely changes to the European Site arising as a result of:	
Reduction of habitat area;	There is potential for a reduction of habitat area arising from land-take requirements associated with the plan. Impacts may arise directly through inappropriate siting of development within a European site or immediately adjacent to its boundary, which cause deterioration in the factors that support the favourable conditions of the site. Deterioration in water quality can occur as an indirect consequence of development, which in turn changes the aquatic environment and reduces its capacity to support certain plants and animals. Consequently, there is potential for a significant adverse effect on the integrity of these sites and their conservation objectives.
Disturbance of key species;	There is potential for disturbance to wildlife from development and recreational activities associated with the individual elements of the Plan. European Sites that are within the Plan area, or immediately adjacent, are at risk of disturbance through inappropriate development. Sources of disturbance include noise, vibration, light, construction and operation activities or other sources of disturbance arising from recreation and amenity or from the inappropriate timing of works. Disturbance to fauna can also arise directly through the loss of habitat such as feeding and roosting sites for birds
Habitat or species fragmentation;	Habitat and species fragmentation can occur through the breaking up of habitats resulting in interference with existing ecological units or when construction introduces a barrier to the free movement of species from one habitat to another.
Reduction in species density	Increased disturbance, loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation can all lead to reduction in species density.
Changes in key indicators of conservation value;	Within and adjacent to The Plan area there are a number of European sites whose favourable conservation status and value is determined by water quality and quantity. Impacts may arise directly or indirectly through contamination of freshwater, marine water or groundwater resources. There is potential for contamination of surface water dependant habitats, both freshwater and marine, through runoff from development during the construction or operational phases and through point source contamination from developments. Contamination may arise through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained.

Climate change.	The Proposed Amendments to the Plan will not result in any emissions to air that would contribute to climate change.
Describe any likely impacts on the European Site as a whole in terms of:	
Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of the sites	The European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network within and adjacent to the Plan area form a complex ecosystem of habitats and species many of which are dependant on surface and ground water of sufficient quality and quantity. The relationship between surface and ground water quantity and quality and habitats is the key relationship that defines the structure and function of many of the European sites within the Plan area and its zone of impact. Diffuse or point source contamination resulting from any proposed development could adversely affect the long-term distribution of the habitats and species for which the sites are designated.
Describe from the above the elements of the project or plan or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale of magnitude of impacts is not known.	
The likely impacts that will arise from the implementation of the Proposed Amendment have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. On the basis of the findings of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment, it is concluded that the Plan:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site that forms part of the Natura 2000 network; and (ii) may have significant impacts on the Natura 2000 network of European sites 	
Therefore, applying the Precautionary Principle and in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required.	

Table 2.5 Potential Impacts

Site Name	Reduction of Habitat Area	Disturbance to Key Species	Habitat or Species Fragmentation	Reduction in Species Density	Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality Etc.)	AA Needed
Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Moneen Mountain cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Inishmaan Island cSAC	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Inishmore Island cSAC	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Castletaylor Complex cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Galway Bay Complex cSAC	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lough Corrib cSAC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Rahasane Turlough cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Rosroe Bog cSAC	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Slyne Head Islands cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Tully Mountain cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Ardkill Turlough cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Cloughmoyné cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Clyard Kettle-holes cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Kilglassan/Caheravoostia Turlough Complex cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Shrule Turlough cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Skealaghan Turlough cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Lough Fingall Complex cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Ballyvaughan Turlough cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Cregduff Lough cSAC	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Dog's Bay cSAC	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No

Site Name	Reduction of Habitat Area	Disturbance to Key Species	Habitat or Species Fragmentation	Reduction in Species Density	Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality Etc.)	AA Needed
Inisheer Island cSAC	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Kiltiernan Turlough cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Omey Island Machair cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Rusheenduff Lough cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Ross Lake And Woods cSAC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mocorha Lough cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Lough Carra/Mask Complex cSAC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
East Burren Complex cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Maumturk Mountains cSAC	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex cSAC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connemara Bog Complex cSAC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slyne Head Peninsula cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Kilkieran Bay And Islands cSAC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Barnahallia Lough cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Lough Nageeron cSAC	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Murvey Machair cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Tully Lough cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Ardrahan Grassland cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Kingstown Bay cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No

Site Name	Reduction of Habitat Area	Disturbance to Key Species	Habitat or Species Fragmentation	Reduction in Species Density	Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality Etc.)	AA Needed
Kildun Souterrain cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Monivea Bog cSAC	No	No	No	No	No	No
Lough Mask SPA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inishmore SPA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cliffs of Moher SPA	No	No	No	No	No	No
Rahasane Turlough SPA	No	No	No	No	No	No
Cregganna Marsh SPA	No	No	No	No	No	No
Slyne Head To Ardmore Point Islands SPA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connemara Bog Complex SPA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Illaunnanoon SPA	No	No	No	No	No	No
Inishbofin, Omey Island and Turbot Island SPA	No	No	No	No	No	No
Inner Galway Bay SPA	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lough Corrib SPA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Section 3 Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment

3.1 Introduction

The main objective of this stage (Stage 2) in the AA is to determine whether the Proposed Amendment (either alone or in combination with other plans, programmes and projects) would result in significant adverse impacts to the integrity of any European site with respect to the site's structure, function and/or conservation objectives.

The Stage 1 Screening has created a list of sites with potential to be affected by the Proposed Amendment. Therefore, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required. The potential adverse effects considered at this stage will either be effects occurring as a result of the application of the Proposed Amendment alone or in-combination with other plans, programmes and/or projects.

3.2 Other Plans and Programmes

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or programmes that might, in combination with the plan or project, have the potential to adversely impact upon European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network. Table 3.1 lists plans or projects that may interact with the Proposed Amendment to cause in-combination effects to European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network. The plans or projects are listed according to a spatial hierarchy of International, National, Regional/Local Projects and Plans.

Table 3.1 Plans & Projects Likely to Cause In-Combination Effects

International		
Directive	Purpose	In-combination Effects
EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	Objectives seek to maintain and enhance the quality of all surface waters in the EU.	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects will result as the primary purpose of the Directive is to improve environmental quality.
EU Freshwater Fish Directive (78/659/EEC)	Objectives seek to protect those fresh water bodies identified by Member States as waters suitable for sustaining fish populations. For those waters it sets physical and chemical water quality objectives for salmonid waters and cyprinid waters.	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects will result as the primary purpose of the Directive is to improve environmental quality.
EU Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	This directive establishes a regime, which sets underground water quality standards and introduces measures to prevent or limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater.	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects will result as the primary purpose of the Directive is to improve environmental quality.
EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)	The Floods Directive applies to river basins and coastal areas at risk of flooding. With trends such as climate change and increased domestic and economic development in flood risk zones, this poses a threat of flooding in coastal and river basin areas.	Potential in-combination impacts may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure such as flood walls or flood defences. Avoidance on, or near protected areas should be implemented or where this is not possible, favouring infrastructure that carries a lower risk of damage to protected areas should be emphasised in the plan.
Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC)	This Directive has the objective of reducing water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources and preventing further pollution.	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects will result as the primary purpose of the Directive is to improve environmental quality.
The Urban Wastewater Treatment	The primary objective is to protect the	No risk of likely significant in-

Directive (91/271/EEC)	environment from the adverse effects of discharges of urban wastewater, by the provision of urban wastewater collecting systems (sewerage) and treatment plants for urban centres. The Directive also provides general rules for the sustainable disposal of sludge arising from wastewater treatment.	combination effects will result as the primary purpose of the Directive is to improve environmental quality.
Sewage Sludge Directive (86/278/EEC)	Objective is to encourage the appropriate use of sewage sludge in agriculture and to regulate its use in such a way as to prevent harmful effects on soil, vegetation, animals and man. To this end, it prohibits the use of untreated sludge on agricultural land unless it is injected or incorporated into the soil.	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects will result as the primary purpose of the Directive is to improve environmental quality.
The Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Directive (96/61/EC)	Objective is to achieve a high level of protection of the environment through measures to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions to air, water and land from industrial sources.	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects will result as the primary purpose of the Directive is to improve environmental quality.
National		
Plan	Purpose	In-combination Effects
National Development Plan 2007-2013	Objectives of the NDP are to promote more balanced spatial and economic development.	Potential in-combination impacts may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure.
National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020	Objectives of the NSS are to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across Ireland, supported by more effective planning.	Potential in-combination impacts may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure.
GRID25 Implementation Programme 2011 - 2016 - Eirgrid	Strategy indicating how EirGrid will implement the 2007 Government White Paper on Energy - "Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland". The Implementation Programme (IP) is a practical overview of how the early stages of Grid25 are to be implemented.	Potential in-combination impacts may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure.
Regional		
The Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010 - 2022	Policy document which aims to direct the future growth of the West Region over the medium to long term and works to implement the strategic planning framework set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS)	Potential in-combination impacts may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure.
Local		
Galway County Development Plan 2009 – 2015 Galway City Development Plan 2011 – 2017 County Galway Wind Energy Strategy 2011-2016 Moycullen Local Area Plan 2005 - 2011 Bearna Local Area Plan 2007-2013 Mayo County Development Plan 2008-2014	Overall strategies for the proper planning and sustainable development of the administrative area of the relevant Local Authorities.	In combination effects may occur through interactions with development plans of adjacent counties. In particular, pressures may be felt at surface water dependant sites downstream through the cumulative impact of point and diffuse sources of pollution e.g. wastewater discharges and runoff from agricultural land. Increased human activity, lighting and increased discharge of waste water may all lead to loss of habitat and disturbance of species as well as a decrease in water quality and subsequent effects on water dependant species Designated sites that may be affected include the Lough Corrib cSAC and SPA,

		Galway Bay Complex cSAC Maumturk Mountains cSAC, The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex cSAC, Connemara Bog Complex cSAC and SPA and Inner Galway Bay SPA
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In addition, there are specific projects supported by the Gaeltacht Local Area Plan and Plans for the surrounding region that will result in potentially significant impacts on a wider scale. These projects include:

- Provision of 110kv electrical supply
- Development of water based amenities on the Lough Corrib Lake shore
- The provision of new or upgraded roads network
- Provision of tourist routes such as the Wild Atlantic Way

Where such projects are to be developed over a number of Local Authority functional areas, the relevant Councils will ensure that development will avoid negative impacts on European sites and will adhere to the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in consultation with the NPWS.

Where linear projects such as electricity supply lines and tourist routes are proposed, these developments will be subject to route selection in consultation with the relevant stakeholders so that environmental and ecological impacts will be minimised.

3.3 Conservation Objectives

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive states that: '*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications of the site in view of the site's conservation objectives*'.

It is the goal of NPWS to draw up conservation plans for all areas designated for nature conservation. These plans will, among other things, set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest within a site. Where no Management Plan is yet available, NPWS have provided generic Conservation Objectives for European Sites as follows:

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected
- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for the SPA
- To maintain the extent, biodiversity and species richness of the site.
- To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

The Annex I habitats, Annex II species and Special Conservation Interests for SPAs will differ from site to site and these are set out in Table 2.1.

Favourable conservation status of a species can be described as being achieved when: "*population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.*"

Favourable conservation status of a habitat can be described as being achieved when: '*its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable*'.

3.4 Potential Significant Effects

The Gaeltacht Local Area Plan is a high level plan that provides a framework for the sustainable development within the Gealtacht areas of Co Galway. The plan has been amended to ensure consistency with the Galway County Development Plan and Core Strategy, incorporate Flood Risk Assessment information and measures, incorporate additional measures to protect designated environmental sites and to address changes in legislation and policy since the adoption of the Plan. Apart from the details and zoning maps for the Village Plans for An Spidéal and An Cheathrú Rua the Plan itself and more specifically the Proposed Amendment does not prescribe the particular locations of any developments of infrastructure. The Proposed Amendment and Core Strategy underpins the development of housing, communities and urban centres with supporting transport, water, waste, energy and communication infrastructure within the Plan area. When examined in an overall context, in particular with the potential for in-combination effects, the Proposed Amendment may give rise to significant impacts on European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network with respect to their structure and function and conservation objectives. The potential threats identified in Stage 1 Screening include habitat loss and species disturbance (with resulting habitat/species fragmentation and reduction in species density) and changes in water quality.

Habitat loss and fragmentation can impact on the integrity of European sites by reducing the extent and/or condition of the habitats and species for which the site was designated. The conservation objectives of sites would be compromised if the Annex I habitats and Annex II species for which the site is designated are not maintained at favourable conservation status or if the extent, species-richness and biodiversity of the site as a whole are not maintained

Site Synopses for the onshore sites within the Plan area such as The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex cSAC, Connemara Bog Complex cSAC and the Maumturk Mountains cSAC indicate that the main threats to site integrity are peatcutting, overgrazing and afforestation. Although there is no land zoned by the Plan for development such as housing/commercial/industrial development within any designated site, development of this type could lead to loss of habitats if inappropriately located within the boundaries of these sites. Impacts from the installation or upgrade of linear infrastructure e.g. roads and other transportation links, water and wastewater pipelines, electricity supply lines, can have a negative impact over a wide distance where such infrastructure crosses designated sites and may affect offshore as well as onshore sites. Impacts can include habitat or species fragmentation where, for example, electricity supply lines interrupt the flight paths of birds or newly installed bridges disturb the migration of salmon.

The Plan includes specific objectives for the ongoing maintenance and construction of marina developments at An Sruthán quay and Cill Chiaráin. Construction could lead to a loss of habitat from Kilkieran Bay and Islands cSAC, which is an extensive coastal complex site of high conservation value, particularly for the fine examples of marine and terrestrial E.U. Habitats Directive Annex I habitats. The Plan also supports the development of both offshore and onshore wind farms, although no specific locations are included in the Plan. Such developments may result in direct loss of habitats, where they are located within designated sites, and indirectly through additional and support infrastructure such as substations and electricity supply lines.

Disturbance to wildlife species can affect their ability to forage, rest and breed. Some species are naturally very sensitive to disturbance while others can become adapted to certain types of disturbance over time. SPAs within and surrounding The Plan area including Inishmore SPA, Slyne Head To Ardmore Point Islands SPA and Connemara Bog Complex SPA host a diversity of bird species, which are potentially susceptible to disturbance. Where disturbance occurs during the breeding season, this may affect breeding success with subsequent impacts on species density and diversity. For wintering coastal birds, disturbance to high tide roosts is most significant. These types of impacts may arise from the development of windfarms, both onshore and offshore and from the development and maintenance of marinas.

Significant disturbance arises particularly when undeveloped areas that have not previously been disturbed are exposed to human activity, noise and other forms of disturbance. The promotion of the Gealtacht and Connemara as a tourism destination may be accompanied by its own particular impacts. The Strategic Plan for Waterbased Tourism in Galway, which The Plan supports in principle,

promotes the revival of South Conamara fisheries, linking angling tourists with other visitors who have particular interests in outdoor pursuits such as walking, canoeing, pony trekking, eco-tours etc. Promotion of this tourism strategy, as well as the Wild Atlantic Way and the development of amenity facilities along Lough Corrib lake shore will lead to increased disturbance of species through increased access to the site, installation of footpaths and cycleways and construction or extension of marinas and jetties. Sites which host bird species such as Lough Mask SPA, Inishmore SPA, Slyne Head To Ardmore Point Islands SPA, Connemara Bog Complex SPA, Inner Galway Bay SPA and Lough Corrib SPA are particularly vulnerable in this regard, as are sites which host otter populations (such as Galway Bay Complex cSAC, Lough Corrib cSAC, Ross Lake And Woods cSAC, Lough Carra/Mask Complex cSAC The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex cSAC, Connemara Bog Complex cSAC and Kilkieran Bay And Islands cSAC and lesser horseshoe bat populations (Ross Lake And Woods cSAC, Lough Carra/Mask Complex cSAC)

Water quality is a key environmental condition that determines the quality of habitat and distribution of species in a number of European sites within and adjacent to the Plan area. Human activities, if not properly managed, can cause deterioration in water quality. Pressures exerted by human activities include the following:

- sewage and other effluents discharged to waters from point sources, e.g. pipes from treatment plants;
- discharges arising from diffuse or dispersed activities on land agriculture, forestry septic tanks); and
- abstractions from waters;

Any increase in population within the Plan area will increase the loading on the existing wastewater infrastructure. In the absence of adequate treatment, discharges from such plants can potentially increase the nutrient loading on receiving waters with direct, long term and adverse consequences for the aquatic environment. Excessive abstractions from surface waters and groundwater for drinking purposes can create pressures on the ability of a water body to maintain both chemical and ecological status. Abstraction of water for public and group schemes supply has the potential to affect European Sites where hydrological pressures arise. Pollution may arise through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained. There is a potential that any designated site within or hydrologically connected to the functional area of the plan which supports groundwater or surface water dependant habitats/species may be adversely affected.

Water quality within the Plan area is for the most part classified as unpolluted according to EPA data, although some rivers, particularly those within with the Corrib and Galway Coast Water Management Units are *at risk of not achieving good status* under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Lough Corrib cSAC, which includes the River Corrib, and the Lough Corrib SPA, are potentially at risk from contamination. The principal threats to water quality in Lough Corrib relate to runoff and discharges from agricultural and forestry sources. The status of coastal waters surrounding the Plan area is good, with the Inner Galway Bay North, which contains the Inner Galway Bay cSAC, and Kilkieran Bay, which is designated as Kilkieran Bay And Islands cSAC are *strongly expected to achieve good status* under the WFD. The Outer Galway Bay is classed as *At risk of not achieving good status*.

In summary, development either in isolation or in combination with other similar developments can potentially lead to significant adverse impacts on the environment as a result of habitat loss/fragmentation, disturbance of species and deterioration in water quality, with long term consequences. These impacts may be considered significant where inappropriate development takes place either within or close to a European site. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Proposed Amendment has the potential to cause long term, direct and indirect adverse impacts on the protection and conservation of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network.

3.5 Integrity of Site Checklist

Generally as part of a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment a checklist of site integrity is carried out. This aids in determining whether a plan will have a significant adverse effect on a European site. This checklist is taken from "*Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*".

Table 3.2 Integrity of Site Checklist

Conservation objectives	
Does the project or plan have the potential to:	Yes/No
Cause delays in progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site?	Yes
Interrupt progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site?	Yes
Disrupt those factors that help to maintain the favourable conditions of the site?	Yes
Interfere with the balance, distribution and density of key species that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site?	Yes
Cause changes to the vital defining aspects (e.g. nutrient balance) that determine how the site functions as a habitat or ecosystem?	Yes
Change the dynamics of the relationships (between, for example, soil and water or plants and animals) that define the structure and/or function of the site?	Yes
Interfere with predicted or expected natural changes to the site (such as water dynamics or chemical composition)?	Yes
Reduce the area of key habitats?	Yes
Reduce the population of key species?	Yes
Change the balance between key species?	Yes
Reduce diversity of the site?	Yes
Result in disturbance that could affect population size or density or the balance between key species?	Yes
Result in fragmentation?	Yes
Result in loss or reduction of key features (e.g. tree cover, tidal exposure, annual flooding, etc ?	Yes

Section 4 Mitigation Measures

4.1 Introduction

Where it cannot be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects from implementation of the Plan, mitigation measures should be devised. These measures may include recommendations for rewording or removing objectives or policies within the Plan that would have an adverse impact if implemented or 'rules' governing the location or phasing of development so that adverse impacts are reduced. The measures that are proposed should be compatible with those proposed by the SEA environmental report and with other relevant plans and programmes e.g Programme of Measures proposed by the River Basin Management Plan and SEA.

4.2 Measures to protect Habitats and Species

As outlined in Section 3.4 of this assessment a number of significant effects that could impact on habitats and species have been identified, including potential loss and fragmentation of habitats, disturbance of species and reduction in species density. Avoidance and mitigation of these impacts will depend on successful implementation of policies and objectives that have been incorporated into the LAP. The principal policy protecting European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network is provided for under Section 3.4 Strategic Development Policy and Objectives. It is a policy of the Council that appropriate assessments are carried out where development projects are likely to have significant effects on European designated sites. This will ensure that project level effects, which cannot be predicted at the Local Area Plan level, will be avoided. Impacts from recreational effects will be addressed by including a requirement for buffer zones along water courses. Restricting development along the banks of watercourses will also prevent the runoff of polluted surface water.

The policies and objectives that are designed to protect habitats and species are outlined in the following sections.

Section 3.4 Strategic Development Policy and Objectives contains the following specific objective which will contribute to the conservation of European sites:

O.S.D. 3 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment

Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011) (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010 (and any subsequent or updated guidance). A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the Plan Area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, screening for appropriate assessment, and a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:

1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or
2. The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or
3. The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of

overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

Section 4.2 Environmental Policies - Biodiversity/Flora and Fauna

P.B. 1 Project planning and design should primarily aim to avoid ecological damage to protected or sensitive habitats. Mitigatory and compensatory measures should only be employed where avoidance is impractical.

P.B. 2 Extensive developments on green field sites should include habitat conservation and creation measures. Planning conditions to this effect may be attached to Planning Permissions.

P.B. 3 Development proposals will be examined in the light of the biodiversity plan for the County which is being prepared.

P.B. 4 Development proposals should have regard to the importance of preserving linkages between areas of high and low biodiversity value, and of maintaining and providing corridors which allow movement of species through development areas.

P.B. 5 Conserve and protect any new areas or sites that are designated in the lifetime of this plan and to take cognisance of any revisions and adjustments to designated sites as furnished by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

P.B. 6 All sites with nature conservation designations to be included and shown on the relevant maps in the LAP.

P.B. 7 Protect sites which are undesignated but are deemed to be ecologically sensitive.

P.B. 8 To protect rivers, streams, lakes, coastal waters and their associated wetlands both as functioning ecosystems and as ecological corridors and networks.

P.B. 9 Conserve, protect and enhance sites with nature conservation designations through the proper implementation of relevant wildlife legislation, through consultation with NPWS and through the appropriate and timely referral of planning applications and waste permit applications to all prescribed bodies.

P.B. 10 Seek to minimise the potential for indirect and cumulative effects, on coastal and marine areas.

P.B. 11 Implement Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and to subject any plan or development proposal likely to directly or indirectly (or in combination with other plans or projects) impact Natura 2000 or European sites (SACs or SPAs), to an appropriate assessment in order to inform decision making.

P.B. 12 Seek to integrate wildlife and biodiversity considerations into all areas of the Council's roles and responsibilities, and into all its works and operations in so far as they relate to this Plan.

4.3 Measures to Protect Water

Section 3.4 of this assessment identified that impacts on water may arise through abstraction of drinking water, point source discharges of wastewater and discharges from septic tanks. Where necessary, Galway County Council has made applications to the Environment Protection Agency for Waste Water Discharge Authorisation and Certificates of Authorisation. Where applications have been made for discharges to a European site, these applications have been subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

In addition, any new proposed or upgrades to wastewater treatment plants should fully comply with all Urban Waste Water Regulations requirements 2001 – 2004 (paying particular emphasis to Phosphorous due to the European sites sensitivity), and should furthermore comply with all

wastewater discharge authorization requirements as per 2007 Regulations and Urban Wastewater Regulations 2001.

Where there is a lack of wastewater treatment or insufficient capacity in terms of hydraulic capacity or biological treatment, Galway County Council have measures in place to address this issue. In terms of the urban developments, the Council has adopted a Service Led Development objective which will ensure that development will be preceded by sufficient capacity in the public wastewater and drinking water infrastructure.

Strict control measures have been included in the Plan to ensure that single dwelling WWT Discharges comply with relevant Environmental Protection Agency guidance (EPA). The council is committed to protecting both groundwater and surface waters through implementation of the River Basin Management Plan for the Western and Shannon River Basin Districts.

Impacts from the abstraction of water will be addressed through compliance with environmental and ecological legislative requirements and the promotion of water conservation.

The following policies and objectives re included in the Plan and are designed to protect water quality and quantity:

O.S.D. 5 Service Led Development

Ensure that urban developments are preceded by sufficient capacity in the public waste water and potable water infrastructure and that developments in rural areas are accompanied by adequate infrastructure and services in accordance with applicable standards and requirements.

4.2 Environmental Policies

P.W. 1 Support the Western and Shannon River Basin District (RBD) Projects and their resultant Management Plans.

P.W. 2 Co-operate with the ~~Western Regional Fisheries Board~~ Inland Fisheries Ireland in protecting the fishing resource of the area.

P.W. 3 Incorporate the recommendations of the Flood Risk Assessment undertaken for the settlements and the incorporation of the findings of the PFRA as carried out by the OPW and any subsequent studies/ reports on same. Avoid building on flood plains.

P.W. 4 Ensure that new developments have waste water treatment systems which comply with EPA guidance documents.

P.W. 5 Encourage owners of old septic tank systems to upgrade waste water treatment to EPA Standards

P.W. 6 Support sustainable drainage systems for surface waters by providing permeable surfaces where possible, and attenuating field drainage where rapid flow from paved surfaces is involved.

Soil

P.S. 1 Construction work should be carried out with least feasible disturbance of soil. Soil storage to be at a safe distance from water courses.

P.S. 2 Development should be avoided if possible on sites with vulnerable soil characteristics or soils which contain sensitive habitats.

P.S. 3 Protect fen and other wetland areas from the direct impact of development and infilling, or from indirect effects such as a change in water regime.

P.S. 4 Identify areas which are under threat from coastal erosion/climate change and undertake programmes of protection and conservation.

4.4 Incorporation of new and amended policies

Section 2.4 of the Stage 1 screening identified a number of individual policies and objectives within the plan that if implemented may result in significant adverse effects on the integrity of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, including their integrity and their conservation objectives. It is recommended that these policies and objectives are amended to ensure such impacts are avoided. Proposed amendments and new policies are indicated by red text.

It is recommended that the following new policies be incorporated into the Plan

- All relevant applications, which are located in close proximity to a watercourse, will include measures to reduce and prevent pollution to a watercourse, both during construction and after completion of the scheme.
- All works in relation to marine development and maintenance of piers, harbours, slipways, landing places and associated facilities will be subject to assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. Works will be permitted only where it can be shown that there will be no adverse impacts upon the integrity of any European designated site as defined by the site's conservation objectives.
- All works in relation to road improvement will be subject to assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. Works will be permitted only where it can be shown that there will be no adverse impacts upon the integrity of any European designated site as defined by the site's conservation objectives. Where new routes are to be developed they will be subject to route selection.
- Proposed walking and tourist routes will be subject to a route selection process, which will take cognisance of site-specific circumstances including consideration of ecological sensitivity. Routes will be permitted only where it can be shown that there will be no adverse impacts upon the integrity of any European designated site as defined by the site's conservation objectives.
- Protect water bodies and watercourses within the Plan Area from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include a 10 metre protection buffer from rivers within the Plan Area, measured from the near river bank. Promote the sustainable management and uses of water bodies and avoid culverting or realignment of these features.
- Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in the Plan Area, ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water runoff from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems proposals.
- The development of renewable energy and its associated infrastructure will avoid negative impacts on European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network and new plans and projects adhere to the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in consultation with the NPWS.

It is recommended that the following existing policies be amended as indicated

The village plan for An Cheathrú Rua should be amended as follows

- P.L.E. 6** To-co-operate with Ireland West Tourism and Údarás na Gaeltachta in developing the indigenous tourism products such as ethnic culture, cycling and walking. **Cycling and walking routes will be developed within and adjacent to European sites only where it can be shown that there will be no adverse impacts upon the integrity of the sites as defined by their conservation objectives.**
- P.L.E. 7** To support the recommendations of "Water Based Tourism-A Strategic Vision for Galway, April 2002". **All projects and developments arising from the implementation of this strategy shall adhere to the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.**

- P.P.I. 1** To continue the multi-annual programme of road improvement of Regional and Local Routes which lead to and serve the village. All works in relation to road improvement will be subject to assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- P.R.C. 8** To encourage and promote the development of walking routes only where it can be shown that there will be no adverse impacts upon the integrity of European designated sites as defined by their conservation objectives.
- P.R.C. 9** To support the indigenous maritime traditions of the area and the potential of its harbours and beaches to provide distinctive and sustainable recreational opportunities only where it can be shown that there will be no adverse impacts upon the integrity of European designated sites as defined by their conservation objectives.
- O.R.C. 2** Initiate a system of walking routes within the village and linking it with the development of a coastal walk along the peninsula. Proposed walking routes will be subject to a route selection process, which will take cognisance of site-specific circumstances including consideration of ecological sensitivity. Routes will be developed within and adjacent to European designated sites only where it can be shown that there will be no adverse impacts upon the integrity of the sites as defined by their conservation objectives

The Village Plan for An Spidéal should be amended as follows.

- **P.T.T.M. 7** To support the provision of a new ~~R336 between Galway and Casla and a link to the village along a path to be investigated~~ strategic route along the Cois Fharraige corridor from Galway to Scriob via Ros an Mhíl. Any new route will be subject to route selection and the avoidance of European designated sites will be prioritised. Any new route will be permitted only where it can be shown that there will be no adverse impacts upon the integrity of the sites as defined by their conservation objectives. Where new routes are to be developed they will be subject to route selection.

For each of the Geletacht districts, community objectives have been listed which the plan supports as being reasonable and attainable. These statements of support should be amended as follows:

The public consultation process, gave rise to a list of objectives for the area. This plan supports them as being reasonable and attainable. All projects that are developed through the implementation of these objectives will be subject to assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. Works will be permitted only where it can be shown that there will be no adverse impacts upon the integrity of any European designated site as defined by the site's conservation objectives.

All recommendations from the Appropriate Assessment have been integrated into the Proposed Amendment.

Section 5 Conclusion

Stage 1 Screening and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the Proposed Amendment No. 1 to the Gaeltacht Local Area Plan 2008-2014 has been carried out. Implementation of the Proposed Amendment has the potential to result in impacts to the integrity of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, if unmitigated. All recommendations from the Appropriate Assessment have been integrated into the Proposed Amendment.

The risks to the safeguarding and integrity of the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network have been addressed by the inclusion of mitigation measures that will prioritise the avoidance of impacts in the first place and mitigate impacts where these cannot be avoided. In addition, all lower level plans arising through the implementation of the Amendment will themselves be subject to Appropriate Assessment when further details of design and location are known.

Having incorporated mitigation measures, it is considered that the Amendment will not have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network.